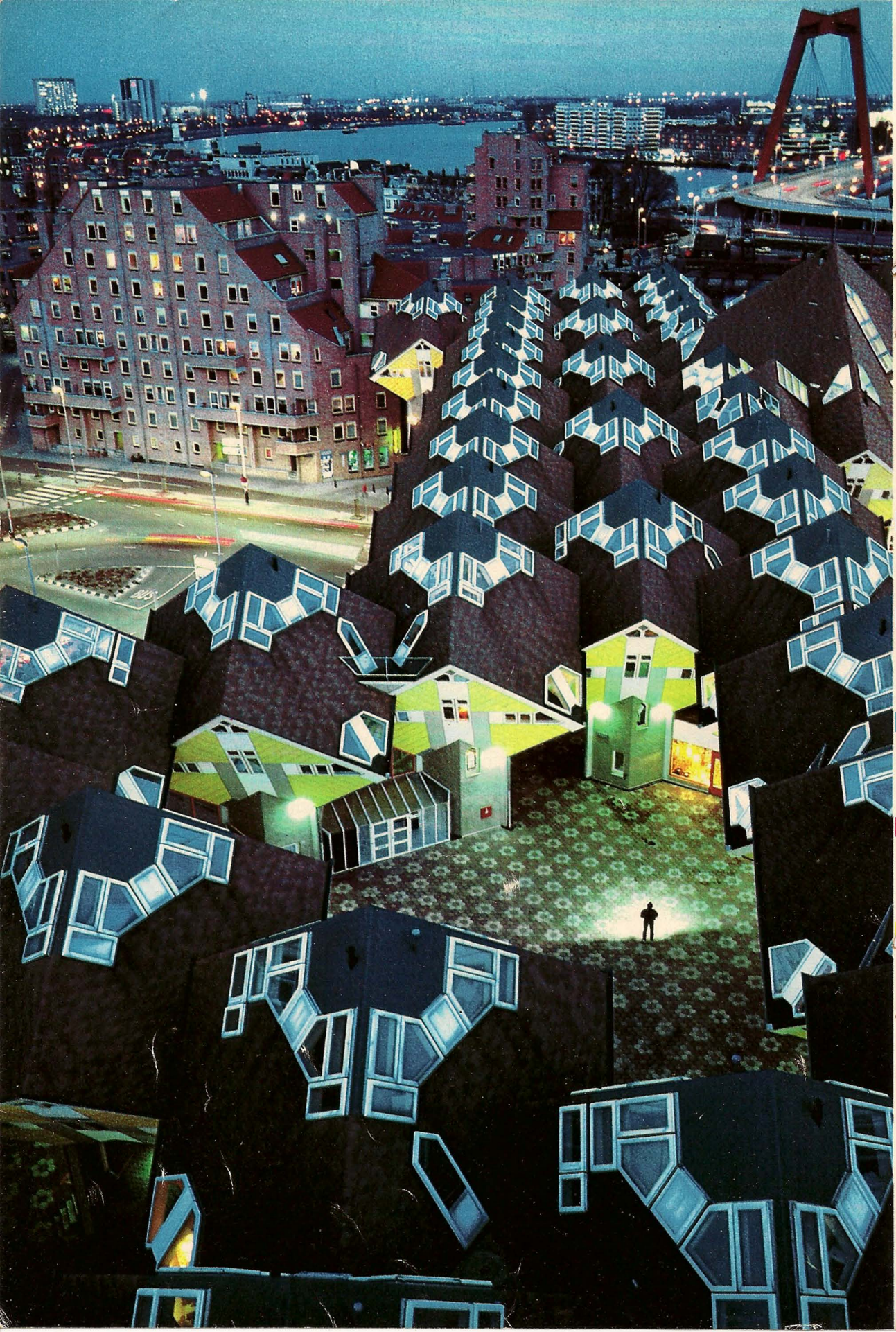
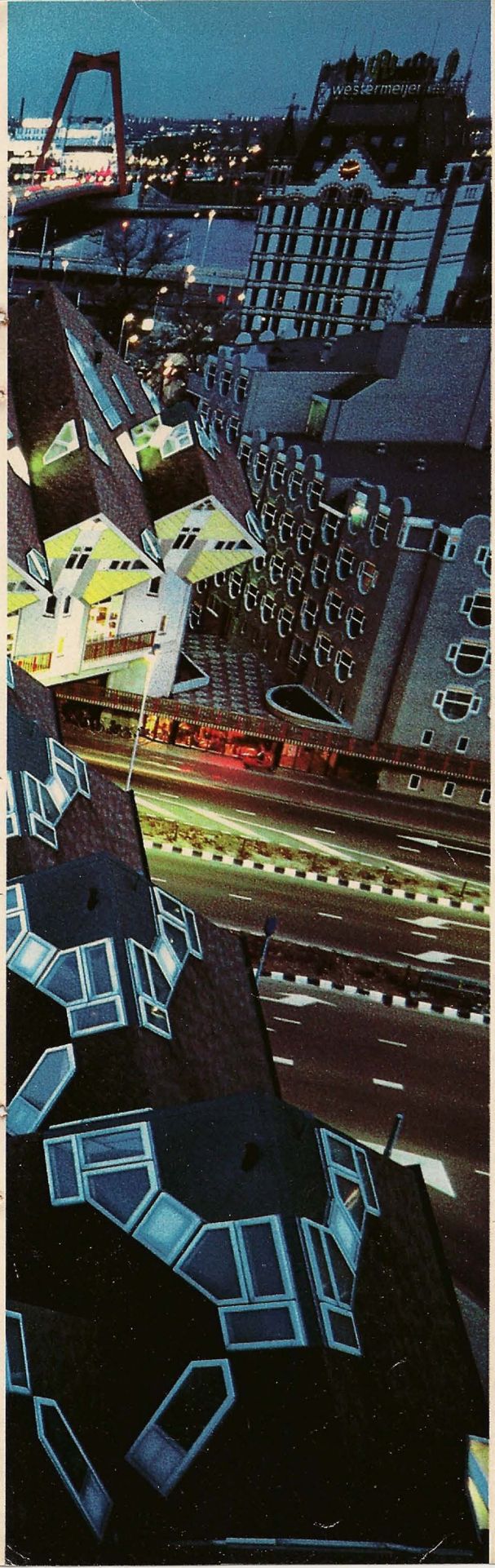





# The Dutch Touch

**In their heyday as seagoing traders and architects of a worldwide empire, the Dutch came home to a land where the books were balanced, the streets scrubbed, the dikes quickly repaired. Today's Dutch are as tidy as ever, but they inhabit one of the world's most crowded countries, brimming with hundreds of thousands who flooded in after the empire ran aground. Undaunted, the stubborn, fair-minded people of the Netherlands plug away at problems with characteristic ingenuity. Even a no-nonsense city like Rotterdam (left), leveled by German bombs during World War II and now the world's busiest port, finds an avant-garde solution to the housing shortage with a street-spanning apartment complex.**

By BART McDOWELL
SENIOR ASSISTANT EDITOR

Photographs by NATHAN BENN
and FARRELL GREHAN

NATHAN BENN

Headlines called it "Murder on the Milk Train," and broadcasters gave hourly reports: Hijackers had seized a train with 24 hostages in—of all places—that orderly kingdom, the Netherlands.

The terrorists were residents of the Netherlands but not Dutch. *South Moluccans?* Newsmen thumbed their atlases to find the Moluccan islands, part of Indonesia. Why had South Moluccans come around the world to live in the Netherlands, and what were their grievances? Before the 12-day siege ended, news bulletins had spread more questions than answers. The Netherlands, it seemed, was a land of ethnic minorities.

"That was the moment in 1975 when everyone realized we had major problems," says Jan Harbers, an Amsterdam official who now works with residents from every inhabited continent.

Historically, the Netherlands has always been a haven for refugees: Jews fleeing the Iberian Inquisitions, Huguenots forced out of France, even the English Pilgrims before they sailed on the *Mayflower*. But all those famous refugees came before the Dutch lost a worldwide empire, full employment, and their complacency.

Today this 41,160-square-kilometer kingdom (15,892 square miles, half the size of Maine) is home to 14.5 million residents—making it one of the most densely populated nations in the world. At least 540,000 are "outlanders," as the government tactfully calls them ("foreigners" seems inhospitable, other terms pejorative). That number doesn't include the slim, sloe-eyed people of Indonesian ancestry who have Netherlands nationality and speak Dutch "with a sweet, singing tone," as some say. "We consider them fully Dutch," one man told me.

Surinamers—some of African stock, others from the subcontinent of India and the East Indies—may also carry Dutch passports; about half as many live in the Netherlands, roughly 180,000, as in independent Suriname. "They are here because we were there," says a clergyman.

People once known as guest workers (and now often the guest unemployed) may come from Turkey (156,000), Morocco (112,000), southern Europe, even West Germany or Britain.

South Moluccans remain the hardest core. They have resisted any form of assimilation since the first 900 arrived on the ship *Kota Inten* 35 years ago. These Protestant Christians were warriors loyal to the Netherlands in the colonial struggle against Muslim Indonesia after World War II. They say that the Dutch led them to believe they would help them win the independence of their homelands. Bitterly, some have insisted on living "temporarily" in the barracks of old concentration camps while nursing their dreams of returning home. They have competing governments-in-exile. Moluccans now number 40,000, and the younger people seem as obdurate as their parents.

Though France has its Arabs, Germany its Turks, and Britain its Indians, no other European country has anything like the Netherlands' variety of new residents living in such proximity and concentration. Perhaps 10 percent of the Dutch population now comes from exotic stock. Not impressive by U. S. standards—but a new demographic experience in modern Europe.

This unmelted pot now bubbles with a national unemployment rate that hovers around 13 percent—though among some minorities the rate is far higher. Generous health insurance and other benefits cushion the hardship. A quarter of the population of Amsterdam is on welfare or social security.

Since their government stoutly opposes ghettos, old Dutch families in working-class neighborhoods smell strange foods cooking and hear the high-decibel sounds of alien music, the voices of children who noisily stay up well past the traditional Dutch bedtime. Native-born Dutchmen compete for jobs with the outlanders and pay high taxes for services that the strangers receive. No wonder they are reexamining policies of

NATHAN BENN

***Exotic faces*** *line the streets of The Hague, the Dutch seat of government, as Moluccans mark the 36th anniversary of an "independent" Republic of South Molucca. Angry that they received no help in regaining their homeland following the Dutch loss of Indonesia in 1949, South Moluccans resist assimilation in the Netherlands. Bitterness has erupted into violence several times.*

*An estimated 10 percent of the Dutch population is of foreign extraction. Traditionally tolerant, the Dutch levy fines against anyone caught making racist jokes in public.*

their welfare state and even their historic traditions of tolerance. Visitors may well ask, "Who are the Dutch today?"

Once the answer was easy. I can remember when Dutch friends defined themselves proudly as "traders and preachers." They counted their blessings and their cash, and they boasted, "Our language has at least eight words for 'cleanliness.'" Admirable. And how many synonyms for "dull"?

But the Dutch were never dull. These were the folk who produced Rembrandt, Mata Hari, and Limburg cheeses. On the surface, of course, they seem phlegmatic, cautious, stubborn, and blunt—how else should a Dutch uncle speak?

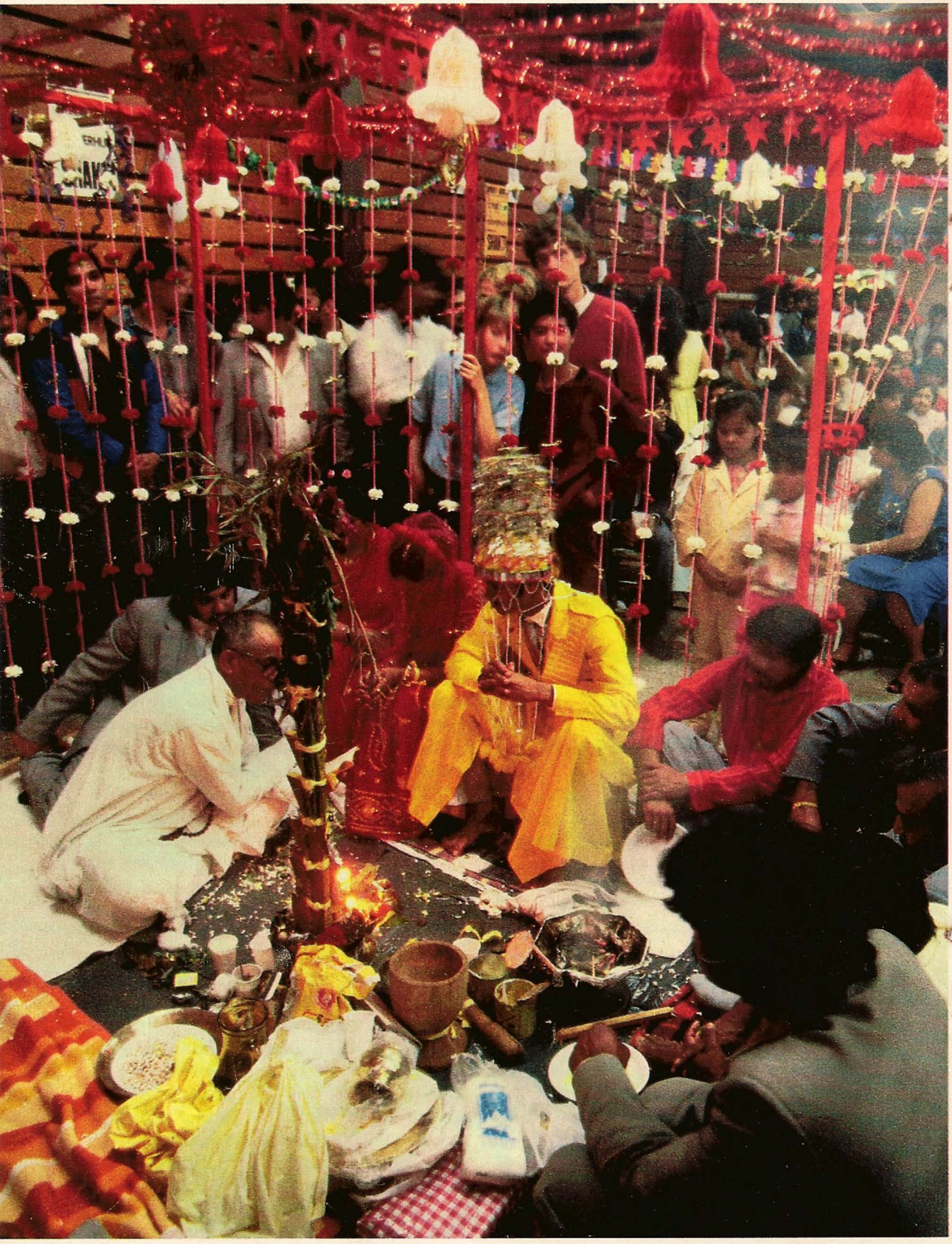
Matter-of-factly, Dutch engineers still take on daunting jobs: expanding the world's busiest port, Rotterdam . . . completing the world's most complex public works scheme, the Delta Project (page 526).

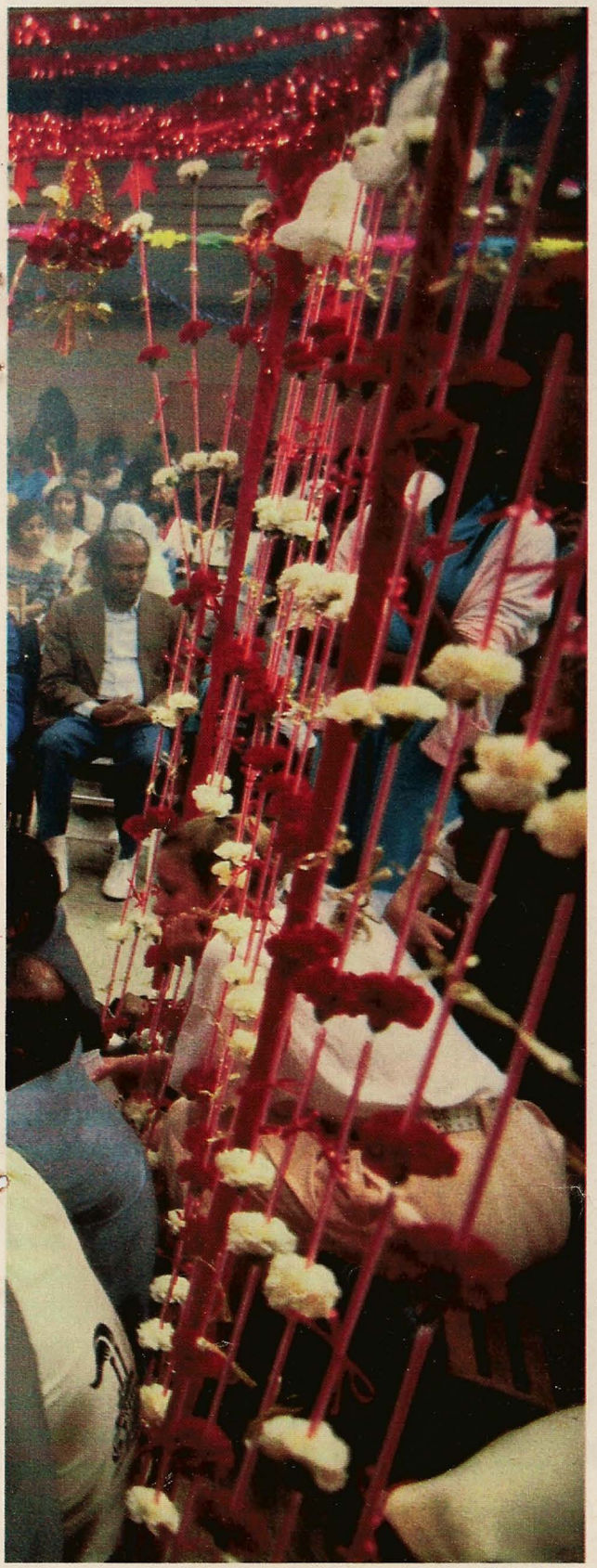
Struggle has made the Dutch what they are. Rome's historian Tacitus wrote of the people living in the Rhine Delta, "They form a Germanic group that is extremely civilized but with rude manners." Pliny the Elder took note of man-made hillocks where people lived just above the ocean tides in the first century A.D.—"like sailors on a ship, when the surrounding land is flooded."

The first real polders—reclaimed lands—date from about 1100, and drainage windmills began pumping in the early 1400s. As one observer marveled, "God created the world, but the Dutch made Holland." Canals scored the soggy soil. Squat barges and tall sailing ships brought prosperity to growing ports.

The Dutch repelled invaders, harassed occupiers, and grabbed imperial prizes. Once their empire embraced 80 million people. But the Dutch also learned to avoid foreign quarrels. Grudges were not Christian—and were also bad for business. Neutral in World War I, the Netherlands later became the home of the World Court.

World War II and Hitler's five-year occupation tested Dutch mettle. Alone among Europeans, Amsterdammers went on a general strike to protest the persecution of Jews.





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After their own liberation the Dutch lost their empire but won world trading markets. Great companies—both Dutch and multinationals like Royal Dutch/Shell and N.V. Philips—hired battalions of workers. So former colonials came home along with loyalists from Asia and the New World and hastily recruited laborers from lands around the Mediterranean. Of course, the newcomers stayed on.

For all the new Dutch diversity, many people still follow traditional pursuits: They make cheese, balance accounts, tend tulips, paint canvases, fish for herring, and wear wooden shoes in muddy gardens. Their standard of living remains among the highest in the world.

Behind their ramparts—1,200 miles of dikes, dams, and dunes—the Dutch still struggle against an old and intimate enemy, the sea. Recently, though, they talk of a truce. "We have taken our last land from the ocean," a conservationist assured me. Times change.

But traveling around the Netherlands, one wonders. For all the oceanic flatness of the land, for all its geometric farms with Mondrian angles, the country conserves a vast variety.

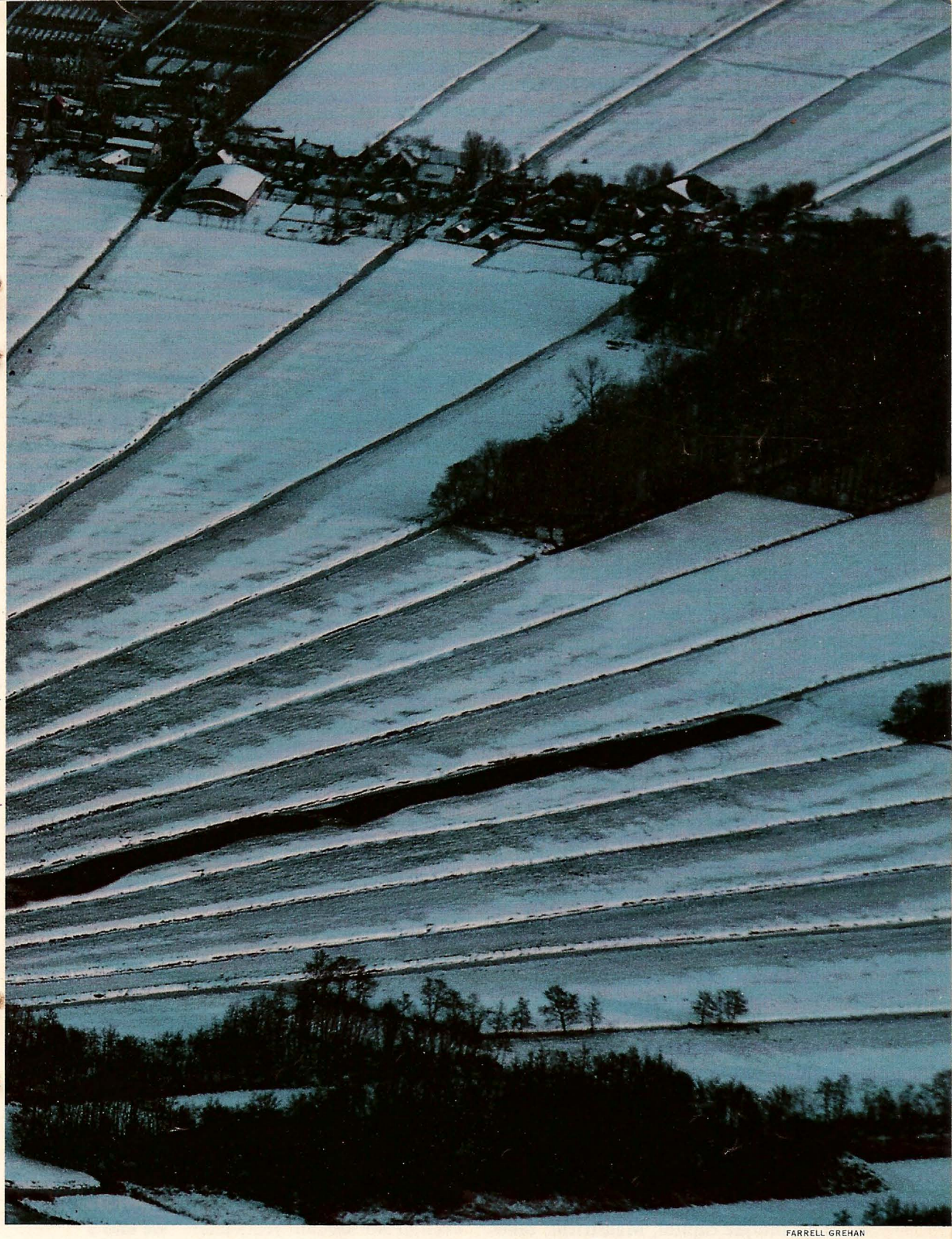
Each city has its stubbornly protected flavor. Rotterdam, rebuilt from war rubble, is all work and no play. "Shirts in Rotterdam," says the old saw, "are sold with sleeves already rolled up." The city dies at night.

Spires and towers of Leiden, Delft, and Utrecht are as old as history, the streets as spirited as the students who animate their cafés.

The Hague stands on ceremony. Bureaucrats wear white shirts and dark suits, for The Hague is the seat of government. But not the capital: That titular distinction belongs to Amsterdam, and only the Dutch can understand the difference.

***Curtain of flowers*** *and drinking straws separates a red-veiled Surinamese Hindu bride and yellow-garbed groom from guests at a ceremony near Amsterdam. Some 170,000 Surinamers in the Netherlands accepted the offer of continued Dutch citizenship following their nation's independence in 1975.*

***Flat appears vertical*** *in this aerial view of sub-sea-level farmland near Naarden in the central Netherlands, where Dutch farmers trim their fields*



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*with drainage canals. Nearly half of the Netherlands consists of polders—reclaimed land—and one-quarter of the nation lies below sea level.*

Everyone, though, sees the difference between the cities themselves. The Hague is neat and stuffy; Amsterdam is untidy and self-indulgent—with much to indulge: museums, concerts, theaters, piety, and sin. The oldest church in town abuts the red-light district. Antique houses slouch, and the city rings with secular bells: bicycles, streetcars, striking clocks. Restaurants offer menus for pet dogs, and dogs offer hazards for strolling the streets.

Northeast, but still within commuter range, lie lands newly seized from the sea and the raw, planned city of Lelystad. ("It hasn't a single disco," an Amsterdammer mourns. "But it does have toilets for dogs.") Its residents are recent transplants, and wives of commuters are called "green widows."

The village of Volendam, surrounded by Protestants, is a Catholic island in the north. Tiny, immaculate houses face the street with windows polished like gemstones; on each sill sits a small still life of fancy china and pampered plants. ("It is not true that we wash our windows every day," says Hilda Reurs firmly. "Only once a week!") And in their own special dialect Volendam fisherfolk tell how to take the smell of herring off one's hands: First apply vinegar, then wash. People wash a lot in Volendam.

Along the North Sea stretches Friesland, guarding its language with road signs in both Dutch and Frisian. The horizon is lanced by windmills, onion-dome church steeples, and trees tilted by prevailing winds. Offshore, these winds and ocean currents create "walking islands," as local folk call the unstable sandbars that gain and lose their sand. Beyond them lie the North Sea gas rigs, a hefty source of Dutch revenues before the price of natural gas tumbled.

People in Friesland have short first names ("they say there used to be a tax for registering long names"), but in the Catholic south, names expand to honor relatives and saints. In Limburg everything seems more expansive. Hilly, wooded, this was coal-mining country, often invaded during its long history. The antique capital, Maastricht, takes its name from the River Maas, or Meuse, which Romans forded there in A.D. 43.

Limburg's governor, Dr. Sjeng Kremers, a former professor of psychology, characterizes his people as "really southern. We like to laugh and eat. We're optimistic. And we celebrate everything—if we are sick, we say, 'I celebrate because I'm ill.' We had a trinity here: the provincial government, the old coal mines, and the church. We like to work—and never have strikes. Minority groups here have caused no trouble."

East of Arnhem on the German border, farmers plow black earth, whitened in spring by foraging sea gulls. Pig raisers may think in terms of exporting whole farms—livestock, machinery, and even, temporarily, staff—to developing countries. "But at home they are conservative," notes a village physician. "On the German side of the frontier, villagers keep their curtains drawn at night. Not the Dutch. We have nothing to hide—or else we want to see outside."

A varied people, innovative, traditional.

"What charm is for Italians, and allure for the French, tolerance is for the Dutch." So says art historian Luca Dosi Delfini, a resident of the Netherlands for 20 years, an Italian by birth and a former resident of France. "The Dutch," he adds, "are the most civilized people I know."

"Our tolerance is largely a myth," insists Amsterdam clergyman Dr. H. G. Boswijk. "When Surinamers come to our churches, people observe a friendly distance. They say, 'You are welcome, but leave us alone.' It's a kind of implicit apartheid."

And yet Dr. Boswijk reports a recent incident in his own Protestant church. "A lesbian couple had a child by means of a donor, and they wanted to baptize the baby. The congregation discussed the matter at length—and decided we should baptize the baby. It was a very happy day."

"That could not have happened ten years ago," says one feminist leader, herself a lesbian. "But we get along with each other in the Netherlands because we are a small country. We need each other."

In the Catholic south—"below the rivers," as they call it—Protestants were often isolated. Film producer Ton Vriens, who grew up in the south, recalls such isolation even in Amsterdam years later: "We had a Catholic baker and butcher—and Protestants wouldn't shop there. Many Dutchmen knew what it was to be different."

And perhaps that was the very reason so many Dutch risked their lives during the Nazi occupation to save Jewish neighbors. Consider Judith Belinfante, director of the Amsterdam Jewish Historical Museum. She was born to a Jewish couple in hiding in The Hague during the occupation. Her parents' former maid, a girl not yet 21, announced that she herself was the mother, registered the birth as illegitimate, and secured a ration of milk for the baby, risking her own life.

Tolerance seems too weak a word.

A longtime admirer of the Dutch is the former Spanish ambassador to The Hague, the Duke of Baena. His book *The Dutch Puzzle* is widely quoted and, like everything else in the kingdom, debated.

The duke calls the Dutch "grand and petty. . . . materialistic and realistic—and above all, extremely religious. . . . Their exterior is . . . slow in movement, the rhythm of bicycles and barges. . . . yet in no part of the world have I known a more nervous people. . . ."

A Dutch housewife complained to me about Moluccan child rearing: "They have loose hands." Meaning Moluccans slap their youngsters. It was the same complaint that 17th-century citizens of Leiden leveled against the refugee English Pilgrims—too harsh with their children.

"In 20 years I have never seen a child physically punished," notes Dosi Delfini. "Heroes are not welcome," he continues, "and neither is rhetoric nor extravagance.

FARRELL GREHAN

***Floral artistry*** *in The Hague portrays Beatrix, Queen of the Netherlands, at right, and 77-year-old Princess Juliana, who abdicated in favor of her daughter in 1980. Ruled by matriarchs since 1890, the Dutch invest their monarch with few political powers beyond selecting the person who forms a government after each national election.*

When my friend from Germany brings her fancy car to Amsterdam, she often gets a broken window."

Last winter, when canals froze solid, the Dutch held their traditional 11-city ice-skating race. Some 17,000 citizens signed up to skate, among them a last-minute entry listed as "Mr. van Buren," actually 18-year-old Willem-Alexander, Prince of Orange and heir to the throne.

The prince completed the 200-kilometer tour in 14¼ hours, and a delighted Queen Beatrix greeted him at the finish line. The prince was roundly cheered for spunk and endurance. But heroism has a price.

"The palace shouldn't have let him sign up ahead of others who were turned away," some people grumbled. "It was unfair."

Rotterdam businessman S.J.R. de Monchy recalls that when his wife inherited some old family jewelry, she wanted some diamonds reset. "But the jeweler refused to do it. 'These stones were set over charcoal,' he said, 'so they would glitter less.' It was bad taste to show off."

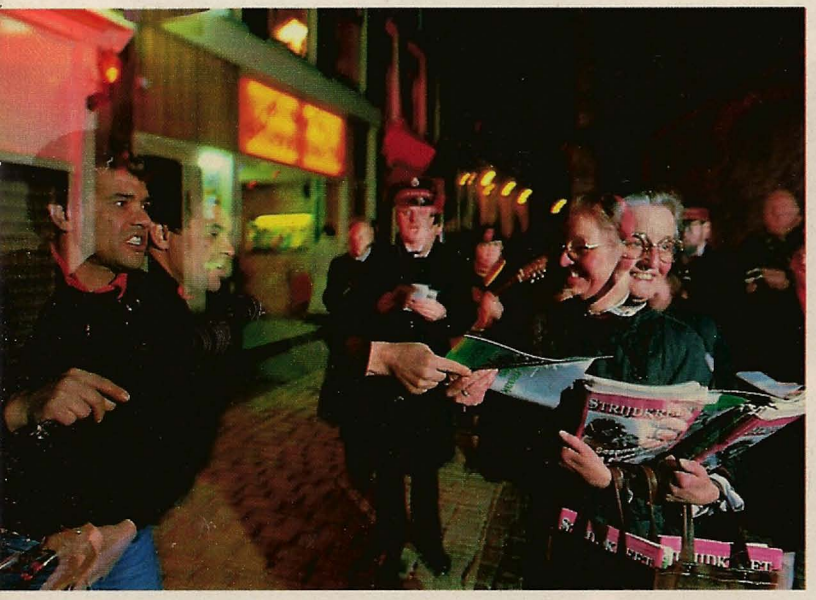
A Calvinist society with stubbornly maintained traditions. Now enter the exotics, bearing problems. Drugs, for instance.

***Royal paperwork*** *occupies Queen Beatrix* ***(right)*** *daily in her office in The Hague. She is of the House of Orange-Nassau, the ruling dynasty since 1814.*

*Restored to its 17th-century grandeur, the royal country estate of Het Loo Palace* ***(below)****, near Apeldoorn, was donated to the state in 1971 for use as a museum.*

BOTH BY NATHAN BENN

***Window-shopping*** *takes on a new meaning in the Wallen, Amsterdam's infamous red-light district. Here in the heart of the capital, prostitutes beckon from brothel windows (**right**), and Salvation Army volunteers (**below,** in a double exposure) cheerfully distribute literature. Loosely regulated by authorities, many of the port city's several thousand prostitutes pay taxes, get regular checkups, and participate in government-sponsored health and insurance plans. They also take traveler's checks.*



Drugs are met more frequently by Dutch tolerance than by law enforcement.

As a crossroads city with far-flung trade, Amsterdam has had its share of hard drugs, and crime increased with narcotics. But things have changed since Amsterdam's happy hippie days in the 1960s. Mayor Ed van Thijn's cleanup campaign has brought such a decrease in crime rates that Amsterdam is now a strong contender for host of the 1992 Summer Olympics. Yet there is still work to do.

"Hard drugs have ruined the brothel business," complains Frits van de Wereld, a kingpin of local prostitution and the hashish market. Frits owns seven brothels, by his own count. ("Actually, he owns 11, but won't admit it for tax purposes," insists crime reporter Hans Hofman.)

"I been here 59 years—and no protection paid," Frits says firmly. "No Mafia here. Too small. The girls here? Not Dutch girls—70 percent international." But street prostitutes—tolerated if not legally accepted—have undercut prices in brothels. "Hard drugs is *finish*."

The former chief of the Amsterdam narcotics squad, Barry Thomas de Koningh, estimates that of 400 street prostitutes, 300 are addicts. "Our old opium law lists illegal drugs, but the public prosecutor gives guidelines to the police. Marijuana is technically a misdemeanor, but it is not enforced."

True. At the Bulldog café on Leidseplein, customers can openly buy marijuana in a variety of blends and flavors. Dozens of coffeehouses around town display signs showing the seven-fingered leaf of the marijuana plant. They serve hash-laced "space cakes" with butter and syrup.

"We're not interested in these people,"

FARRELL GREHAN (ABOVE); NATHAN BENN

explains officer de Koningh. "We want hard-drug *dealers*. If people in these respectable places try to sell hard drugs, the owners will call the police. I just arrested a heroin dealer. He could get six years."

Of the 10,000 addicts in Amsterdam—half of the Netherlands total—40 percent are Dutch, 30 percent Surinamers, and the rest foreigners, chiefly German.

Mayor van Thijn asks, "What gives Amsterdam the bad reputation? Our addicts—even counting foreigners—represent slightly more than one percent of our population. Rome has 50,000 addicts—nearly 2 percent of the Roman population. Comparing big cities of the world, we're not on top."

Mayor van Thijn has used an innovative approach with squatters—"a decreasing problem," as the mayor observes it. A few years ago groups of far-left young people would seize any vacant building and live there. Until recently Amsterdam had been losing population for years as families moved to suburbs and factories relocated. Vacant buildings were plentiful, and city laws made eviction difficult. Several times a year revolution-minded squatters staged major riots, wearing helmets and using paramilitary methods. Squatters had their own illegal radio station, their own newspaper ("a good one—I read it," notes Mayor van Thijn), and an alarm system that rallied public support when police threatened. "When I became mayor, I stated that I wanted to end the spiral of violence," the mayor recalls.

And then the squatters took over a vacant carpet factory, a site that the city council had voted to use for a hotel. "I was forced to take back the site," says Mr. van Thijn. "And it was a test to avoid violence.

"I took a risk. We announced the day before that we would take back the building. The squatters mobilized some 2,000 people inside. When 800 police arrived, I ordered them to enter the building unarmed, without baton or battle dress. One by one the police took out the squatters. After two hours or so, the others inside decided to leave. You see, by announcing our plans in advance, we were sure everyone would be inside—not fighting in the street." So there was a relatively peaceful eviction.

A very Dutch solution.

Though new and tougher property laws to take effect next January may ease the problem, Amsterdam still has some squatters. Jaap, 29, is one of them; for legal reasons, he does not reveal his last name. When I met him, Jaap and a hundred squatter colleagues had lived in "their" building on Spuistraat for more than two years. "Our movement has almost fallen apart," he said. His own living area looked it: mattresses on the floor, paperback books and kitchen utensils scattered around.

"We are unemployed, mostly, living on welfare," said Jaap. "I am a student with a stipend from the government, and the only person here with a structured life. I'm a member of the Communist Party, but not active. . . . A weakness in our squatter movement is ethnic. We are mainly white men. But in Amsterdam, maybe 10 percent of the young people are Moroccans or Turks—and they're not squatters. Surinamers are taboo. As a political movement we're finished."

Inside trade unions ethnics do only slightly better. In Utrecht I talked with Turkish-born Talip Demirhan, a Muslim employed in the Christian trade union movement, the CNV, advising the union on policy toward minorities. "We want a society where everyone participates," says Mr. Demirhan. "I

know 18 kilos of laws dealing with aliens."

So far, only 5 percent or so of union members come from minorities—Surinamers, Turks, and Moroccans, in that order. And because of their authoritarian government at home, Moroccans have special problems. "Some Moroccans are fearful of informers who report to Moroccan secret police."

Talip Demirhan came to the Netherlands without his wife, and the marriage ended in divorce. "Many have had that fate," he says. "Many Turks came from rural areas, and they kept old ideas here. But Turkey itself has changed. After 1960, television came to Turkey—now even your program 'Dallas.' Women imitate Pam and Sue Ellen. My mother used to wear seven meters of clothing. Now she behaves like Miss Ellie. In the Netherlands, Turks change slowly. Only 15 percent of Turkish women here work outside the home."

I met one of them in The Hague, a housemaid in the historic Hotel des Indes named Dolma Nihal. At 29 she has been married ten years. Her husband used to work in the Philips cable factory, but he is now out of work and gets unemployment compensation. Friends and neighbors tend their four young children while Dolma is at work. "No, my husband does not help with housework," she laughs. "Turkish men never help the way Dutch men do."

Turkish foods are available in local shops, and medical facilities are better than in Turkey. ("Here they even have translators at the hospital.") But Dolma still hopes to return home. Her children—all born in the Netherlands—speak Dutch with one another. "They'll decide on their own to stay or go."

Turks can go home at age 55 with a small pension—about $370 a month. But staying in the Netherlands, they get far more, plus an allowance for children, low rents, and health insurance. "So it is cheaper for the Netherlands if they go home," notes social worker Evert van den Broek.

This year Ramadan, the month-long Muslim observance comparable to Christian Lent, began on May 10. The long days in northern Europe present special problems for Muslims living in the Netherlands. They must take no food or water from dawn until sundown, so such a fast can last more than 16 hours. "I must not even swallow my spittle," an Egyptian chauffeur told me.

During Ramadan I visited one of Amsterdam's 25 mosques, a former auto-repair garage converted for worship with carpets and crystal chandeliers. The imam, or prayer leader, M. S. Echarrouti, proudly told me, "Until 1979 we met in the basement of a Catholic church. Now we own our place. On Friday 1,200 people worship here.

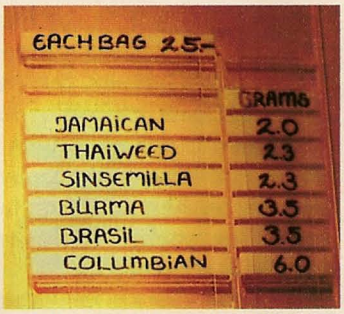
"We have no subsidy; we want no government regulation. Each member pays 13 guilders a month for our expenses—though parents of the 200 children in the madrasah [Muslim school] pay more. We are all Moroccans, though our Muslim Federation also has mosques for Turks, Pakistanis, and Muslim Surinamers."

Some youngsters wore jeans, others long Moroccan robes. A delicious aroma filled the mosque. "Yes, we are cooking food for the breaking of our fast," said the imam.

BOTH BY NATHAN BENN

***Protest is a way of life*** *for many of the Dutch. Amsterdam policemen get a lecture* ***(above)*** *outside the café headquarters of the squatter movement, which has encouraged homeless young people to occupy abandoned buildings. Nearly a thousand Amsterdam apartments are now under squatter control.*

*Demonstrators* ***(facing page)*** *protest the Dutch parliament's decision to permit deployment of U. S. cruise missiles at Woensdrecht NATO base.*

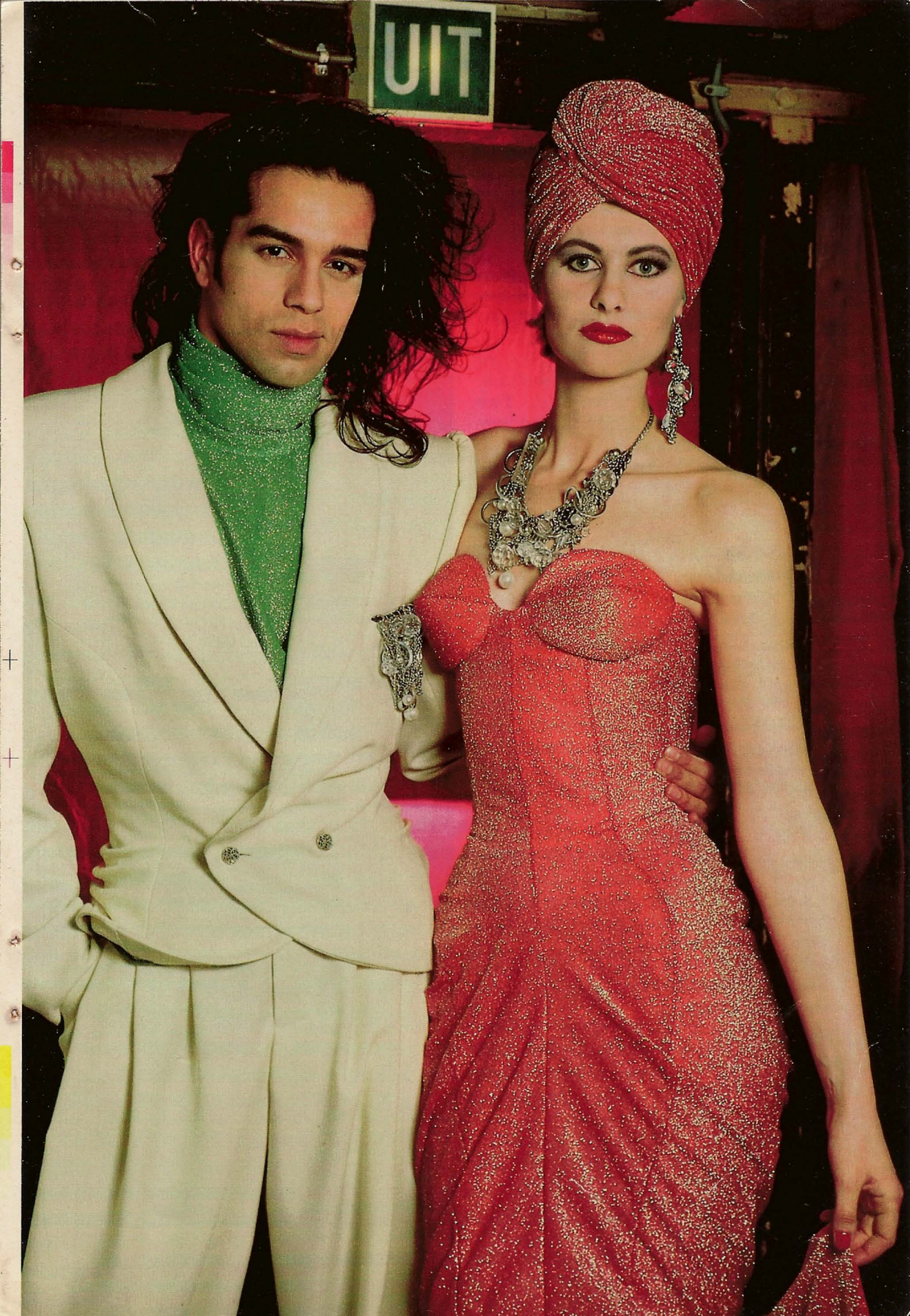



FARRELL GREHAN (TOP AND LEFT); NATHAN BENN

***Anything goes*** *in Amsterdam, a city whose "live and let live" reputation has made it a mecca for the free spirits of Europe. That includes everyone from the street people (**above**), living on handouts, to the established artists and their patrons who gather for conversation at the Arti et Amicitae (**top**), a private club with a five-year waiting list.*

*A glimpse of what's in might be appearing nearby at the Paradiso, a combination theater and disco with an occasional fashion show. In a basement dressing room, models (**right**) pose in the latest from Dutch designers.*

*Amsterdam's free and easy ways have also made it one of the top drug-trafficking areas in Europe. Although technically illegal, marijuana is on the menu (**above**) in many coffeehouses, while authorities reserve their get-tough policies for a growing problem with hard drugs and crime. "We thought we could be tolerant and still control hard drugs," says a government official. "We were very naive."*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"First, some dates. Then bread and *harira,* a hearty soup of meat and vegetables. The meal is for working people who have no family here. In Islam it is thought good to give food to those hungry or fasting."

Last spring Muslims received permission to broadcast on Dutch television, joining Catholics, Protestants, and political partisans who have programs of their own. At the Dutch Broadcasting Foundation studios at Hilversum, the editor of a program called "Passport," B. J. Martens van Vliet, explained his work:

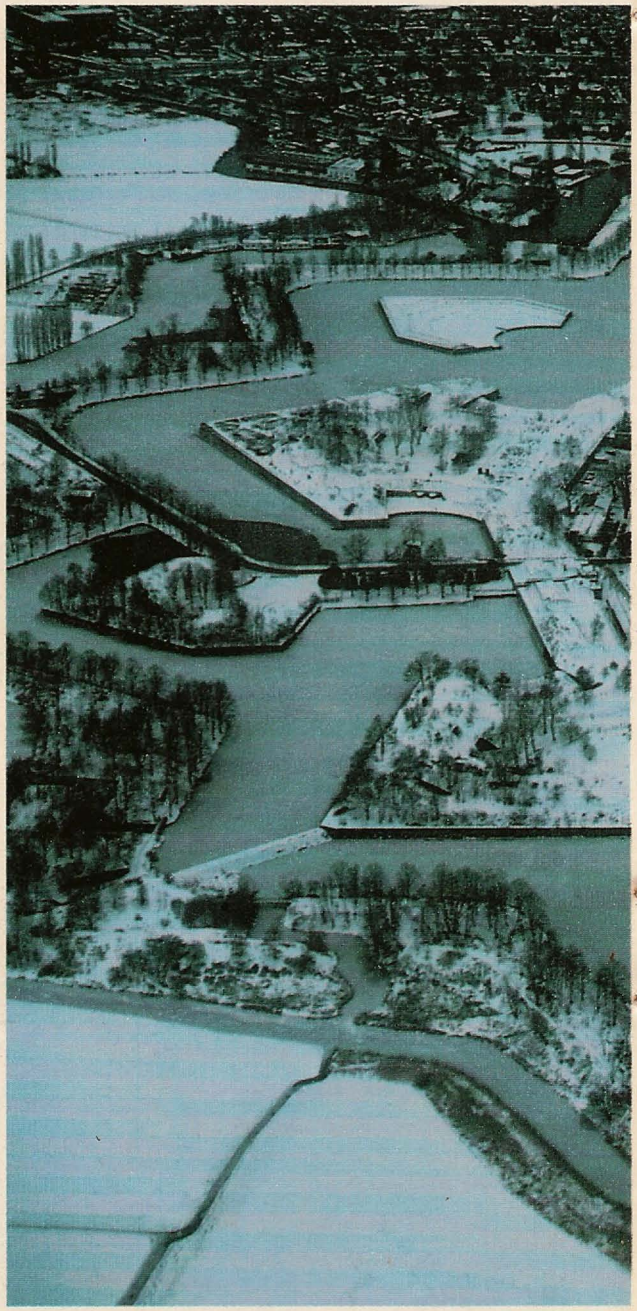
"Most of our audience is Dutch, but we broadcast in five languages—with subtitles. About 15 percent is entertainment. . . . Two words we avoid are 'integration' and 'racism.' Every week we have 30 minutes each in Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, Italian, and Serbo-Croatian. I'm the only Dutchman on our staff of 16."

Dutch television is not above artful propaganda in a good cause. Novamedia/Chanowski Productions airs a puppet show five minutes every weekday evening called *"Fabeltjeskrant,"* with animal characters as protagonists. An owl is the narrator, beavers are technicians (they are Rotterdammers who build dams), and a dog is a stock comic-villain who discriminates against exotic forest creatures. The dog, for example, calls the zebra, who speaks Dutch with a Moroccan accent, "an artificial horse." A stork speaks with high-society mannerisms and comes from The Hague. Chico Lama has a Spanish accent coached by real-life Chilean refugees.

Last March, resident foreigners were first permitted to vote in Dutch municipal elections, so Novamedia TV writers followed suit; children were asked to write letters voting for their favorite animals on the show. Response was massive. The producers expected 20,000 ballots and got 200,000. Newspapers covered the mock election almost as fully as the real ones. The winner was a foreigner: Chico Lama.

As a mirror of society, the TV fable made a fair prediction: Dutch voters in 697 communities elected 49 outlanders to city council posts. I met some of them when they later met in The Hague. The list included the nationalistic Moluccans and even Moroccans, who had been asked by Morocco's King Hassan not to participate.

"Could foreigners someday vote for members of parliament?" asked an Italian



***Star fortress*** *of Naarden guarded the eastern flank of Amsterdam in the 17th century, when the flourishing Dutch Republic became one of the world's leading commercial powers.*

councilman. The government is seriously considering the idea.

Typical of the winners is Secil Arda, a Turkish woman married to a Dutchman. Ms. Arda represents Enschede, an industrial city near the German border; she has lived in the Netherlands since 1980.

"I'm very proud of the Netherlands, my chosen country," she says. "Of course, now I can't go to market without dressing up!"

Not every woman in the Netherlands has so cheerful a view of society. The Dutch lag behind most other Western European countries in the number of working women. "The government gives the feminist movement 12 to 13 million guilders a year to do research," says one activist. "Then they ignore our reports. Discussion is open, but power structures are closed."

In the village of Dinxperlo, smack on the German border, Ypie Volbeda, a social psychologist, works with women in a

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conservative farming community. "I'm considered a bad mother because I don't stay home with my children," she says.

"Farmwives feed young calves and pigs and decide when to breed the cows. A man never enters a vegetable garden. Women keep the accounts, but when the banker calls, a wife serves coffee while her husband discusses the finances."

"The Dutch woman's role is like the Queen's," observes a feminist. "She can do a lot, but she can't decide. There's a traditional limitation on all women."

Queen Beatrix herself would never enter such a social controversy. But she is not at all a weak figure.

The Queen (page 511) has a strong Dutch handshake, a grip suitable for scepter or sword. She is a stylish, magnetic woman with plumb-line posture and a profile meant for minting coins. Best of all is her smile, sudden, spontaneous, genuinely merry.

The Queen has received photographer Nathan Benn and me for photos in her private office at the residential palace, Huis ten Bosch—"house in the woods." She is carrying a bulky manila envelope, in case Nathan wants action pictures. He does. And since these papers are authentic royal homework, the photos can be unposed. Her Majesty hates to pretend.

While Nathan works his cameras, the Queen makes marginal notes. This is work she begins each day by 7:30; she breaks at midmorning for conferences and ceremonial duties and returns to paperwork at night.

Her office, small and bright, reflects an active royal personality—informal family snapshots, avant-garde collage and sculpture, tables of glass and brass, tulips in a vase. Reference materials fill bookshelves; no fiction. But on one wall I spot a framed cartoon: A king in crown and ermine sits at his council table with a full cabinet of wild-eyed court jesters. Says the cartoon monarch to a visitor, "Frankly, it's no better or worse than any other form of government."

Behind Her Majesty's writing desk, a portrait of William of Orange looks over the royal shoulder. This was the heroic prince who drove the Spanish Duke of Alba from the Netherlands when 16th-century Spain tilted at Dutch windmills. As stadtholder, or royal protector, of three of the seven provinces that would later become the Dutch Republic, William fused the fates of his nation and his House of Orange. And though the family Orange gave Britain a king—another William, who shared his British throne with Mary II—the constitutional Dutch monarchy did not formally begin until 1814.

***First of the season**—and reputedly the tastiest—herring is served to the mayor of Katwijk (**right**). A local boat had brought in the first catch. Dutch fishermen net almost 100,000 metric tons of herring annually.*

*The eating habits of gray seals (**below**) are studied in a British-Dutch program on Texel Island. Newcomers to Netherlands waters, the seals have migrated from Britain, where fishermen complain that they deplete North Sea fish.*

Even now republican ways prevail: Dutch monarchs have investitures, not coronations; they never wear a crown. And for 96 years and three generations the kingdom has been ruled by queens—Wilhelmina, Juliana, now Beatrix—though each queen took an oath as "king."

This is not an interview, and Her Majesty's conversation remains off the record. But my own impression of Queen Beatrix is not: She has, as one of her subjects told me, "a bubbling personality" and a panorama of interests. Everyone in the Netherlands knows that the Queen's hobby is sculpture and that she has a studio in this 17th-century palace. But because she also has a keen interest in historic preservation, I'm aware that Queen Beatrix settled for a less-than-ideal studio rather than alter a national

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monument. Her Majesty is also quite conscious of costs, for the royal family bore a generous share of the expense of furnishing this palace.

We finish in the office and move on to the famous Orange Hall. It's historically important, especially for Americans: John Adams presented his letters of credence here. Adams, our first minister to the Netherlands, found his post "like no other. It is all the effect of industry and the work of art."

Art still works in this hall, where the ceiling and walls are completely covered with paintings of the Flemish school. A proper setting for a queen with an artist's eye.

Perhaps it was that same artistic flair that first attracted the 12-year-old Princess Beatrix to the pages of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. She has been a life member of the Society ever since. And perhaps that is the reason we have this chance to meet Queen Beatrix.

The Dutch employ one civil servant for every 16 citizens. "And," observes a Dutch taxpayer, "we pay them the highest salaries in the world."

The government subsidizes an amazing array of private-sector groups: an assortment of businesses, trade union movements, religious sects, environmental organizations that oppose government projects, foreign refugees campaigning against conditions in their homelands ("it's hard to explain to friendly foreign governments when our public funds support their opposition," notes a Foreign Ministry functionary), the feminist and homosexual movements, artists ("our patrons are no longer the church or a prince, but the government"), and homes for wives who have left their husbands.

Free discussion and fairness are a national obsession, and results reflect practical compassion: Dutch bank notes, for example, are embossed with Braille-like numerals to help the blind make change.

At least once, in 1975, the government of Amsterdam reportedly subsidized graffiti. A group wanted to protest some city plans, and an official furnished city paint for a sign on the side of a building, but later complained, "They didn't return our brushes."

Unsubsidized graffiti provides a rich anthology of public statements. They may denounce South Moluccans, cruise missiles,

and farmers who confine chickens in overly cramped cages. My own favorite was a lament lettered just above the waterline of a canal, the war cry of an old Dutch struggle: TOO MUCH OCEAN.

For the ethnics, slogans and debate sometimes obscure the progress. But it's there.

A grade-school teacher says, "First I had to teach Dutch children not to hit Turks, then the Turks not to hit the Moroccans. Now I must teach Moroccan children not to hit little Surinamers." Progress.

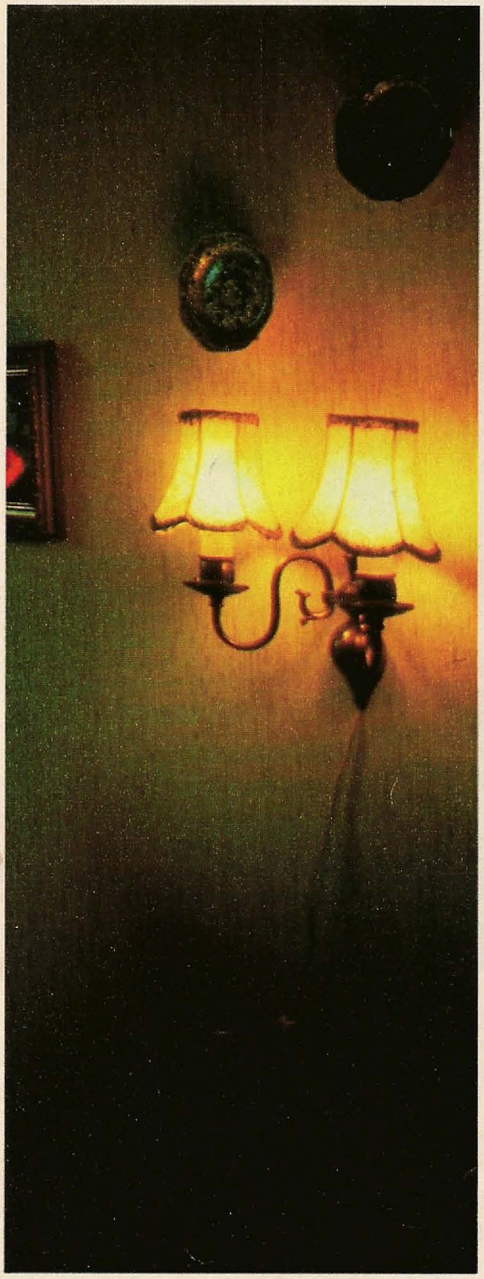
Individual success stories improve the image of new residents. Poor Italians, who came a generation ago as chimney sweeps and peddlers of ice, can look proudly at one of their own, Sergio Orlandini, now president of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.

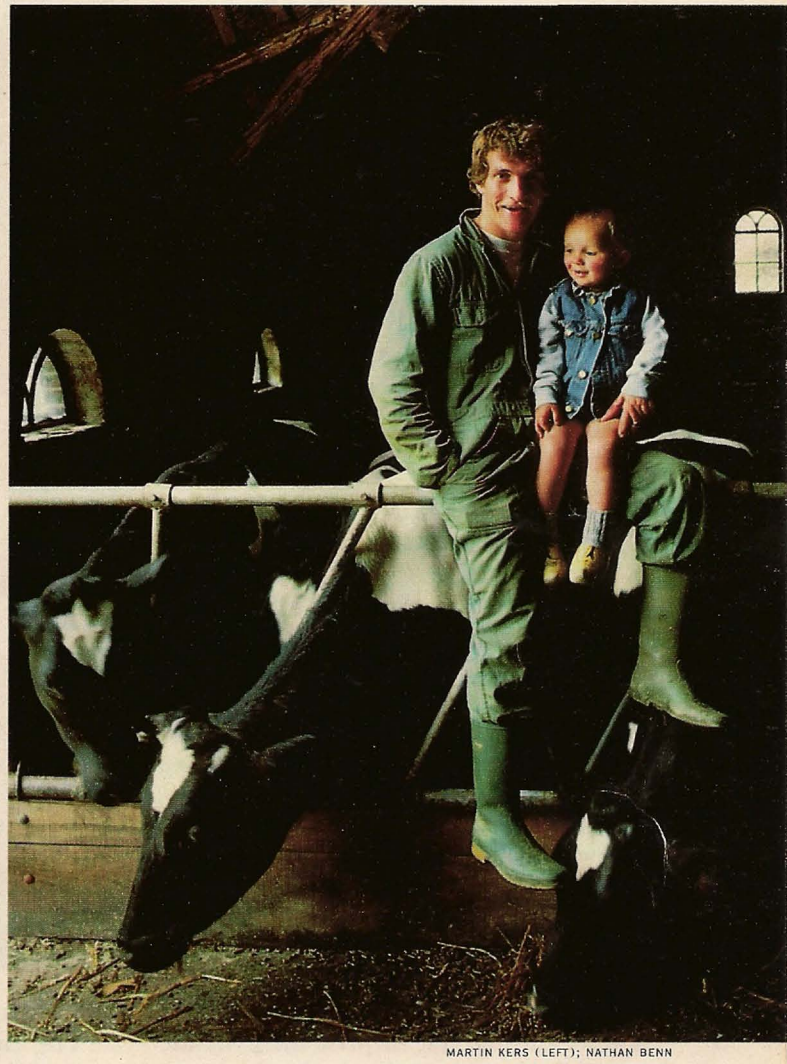
South Moluccans have a hero in Simon Tahamata, age 30, a 60-kilo soccer star with the Feyenoord club of Rotterdam. On a rainy Sunday I watched Simon's team eke out a muddy victory over Utrecht in a stadium aptly nicknamed the Tub.

After the game I met Simon in the clubhouse. His toddler son was romping in his lap as Simon told me about his own boyhood, playing soccer in the streets of Amsterdam. "When the train was hijacked, it was a hard time for me. The mentality of Amsterdam people is very hard. I didn't know any of the hijackers, but I visited them in prison at Christmastime. After all, they threw away their future for us."

A delegation of South Moluccan and Dutch officials held a press conference recently for "historic announcements" on the 35th anniversary of the Moluccans' arrival in the Netherlands. To me their news seemed slight: an "agreement of intentions" to establish a museum of South Moluccan culture, and an offer by the Dutch government to increase the pensions of some 3,000 aging Moluccan veterans and their widows. And, of course, both sides agreed to continue discussions. Were the offers too late, little, and woolly?

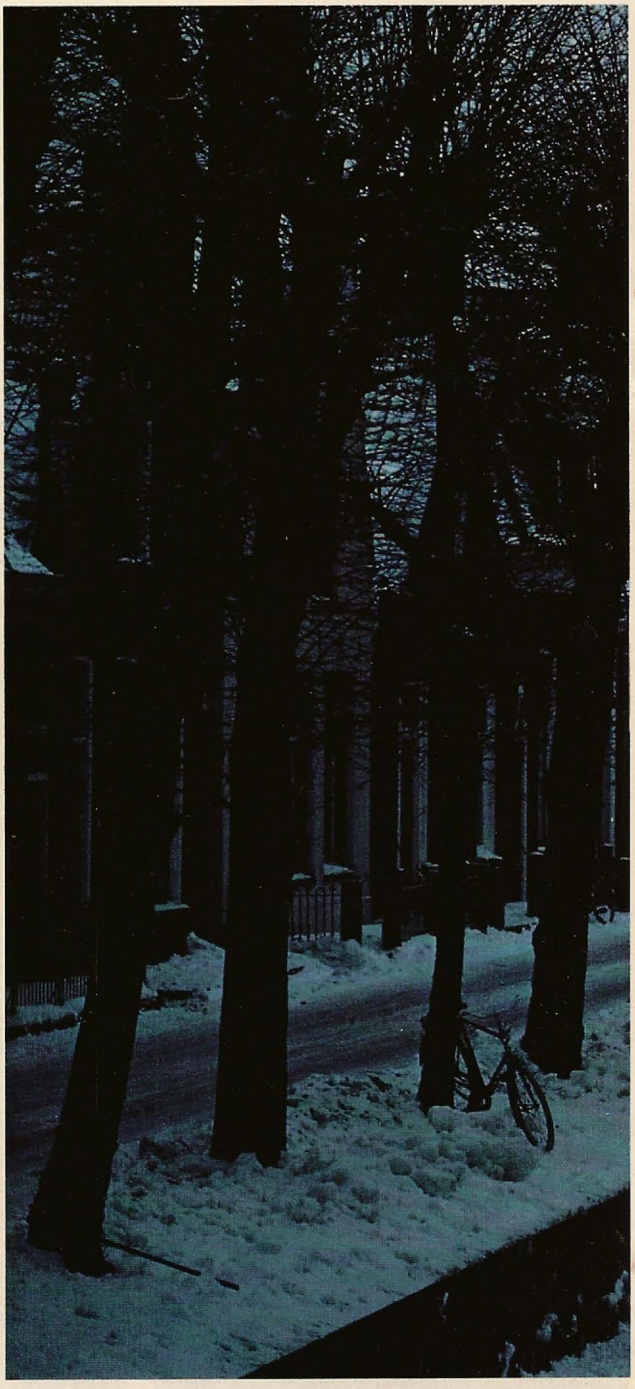
At least seven groups speak for the 40,000





MARTIN KERS (LEFT); NATHAN BENN

***Marathon man plus:*** *Evert van Benthem (**above,** with his son, Rolf), a 27-year-old dairy farmer from Sint Jansklooster, skated to victory in 1985 and 1986 in the Elfstedentocht, a 200-kilometer race over frozen waterways through 11 Frisian cities. The event had been canceled for the previous 22 years because of mild weather. At Hindeloopen (**left**) stragglers pass on the canal outside, as TV keeps pace with the leaders.*



***The rhythm of skates*** *on a frozen canal sets the winter pace for many in the Netherlands. Here the townspeople of Balk, in Friesland, spend an evening skating under the lights.*

South Moluccans. So I asked some unofficial young Moluccans attending the press conference what they thought.

"I am content but not glad," said one third-generation immigrant. Even he wanted to return to an independent homeland.

"I am neither content nor glad," said another. "I am skeptical. It's like your American treaties with Indian tribes." He spoke like a Cherokee after the Trail of Tears.

"We can't make war on Indonesia so they can go home," said a Dutch newsman. "But this agreement keeps us talking."

Talking. A consulting psychologist for the Amsterdam police, Dr. Francis Denkers, says, "We Dutch are too rational. Talking, thinking, but short on gestures." Dr. Denkers, nonetheless, sees some gestures of change. "By 1990 our goal is to have a police force one-quarter women and 10 percent minorities."

Since Dutch citizenship is a requirement for policemen, recruiters have arranged for minority candidates to begin their training—and be assured of a police job—before they undergo a speeded-up, six-month naturalization process. Already more than 50 minority candidates are enrolled.

Meantime, Dr. Denkers sees a change in other attitudes. "In the past two years we have become more conservative. Unmarried couples are marrying. Childless women of 40 have said, 'Now I want to have a child.' There's a rejection of the free sex of the 1960s and '70s. In bookstores you find more religious literature—a deepening of Christian interest, both Catholic and Protestant."

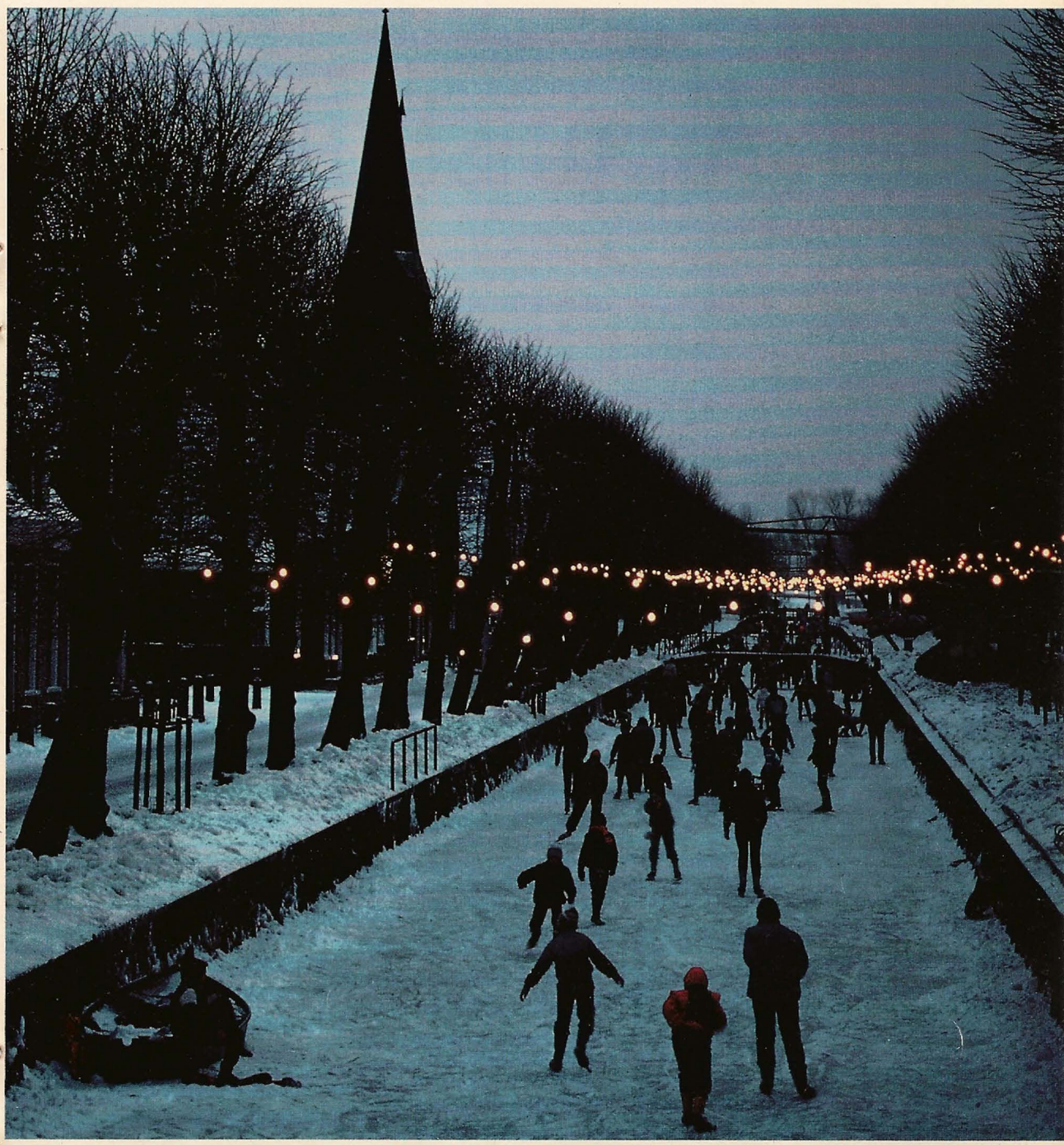
Old Dutch verities are renewed.

Such trends do not surprise the dynamic Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Ruud Lubbers: "As an economist, I think in terms of cycles. So I think of returning to values that seem to have been lost."

Prime Minister Lubbers, a farsighted man, is willing to look ahead and predict —"or guess, even a wild guess"—a view of his country 50 years from now:

"The electronic age will have done its work. Service industries, information, international specialization, travel—all increased. Our working time will be organized less strictly.

"But we'll still need places for human contact. Altogether, there will be more opportunity for religious and social life



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than in the second half of this century."

And the people? "Our population may reach 16 million and gradually recede. We'll have more elderly people. The Surinamers and Mediterranean people will be integrated, and our population will seem a bit different. One out of four or five children will have parents or grandparents born outside the Netherlands."

The prime minister's fellow Rotterdammer S.J.R. de Monchy takes a similar view but adds, "There will still be someone you'll recognize as a Dutchman."

For myself, I think of the new polder lands and raw Lelystad. "It will take a hundred years," people there told me, "for the earth to settle fully." And maybe that long for its people too? □